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ABSTRACT

The problem addressed in this practicum was multifaceted: how to alleviate feelings of isolation experienced by hospitalized and homebound (H/H) children and their families; how to increase professional understanding of H/H teachers' sensitive and demanding roles; and how to increase the sensitivity of middle school students and faculty to the needs of students requiring H/H instruction. The practicum's expected outcome was implementation of a county program involving middle school students' annual adoption of homebound students. The practicum's target population was a select group of 120 sixth graders, 18 sixth-grade teachers, 15 H/H students at various grade levels, and 20 H/H teachers. Surveys were administered to ascertain the extent of each problem, and activities were selected and engaged in to increase middle school student and teacher awareness and to help reduce H/H students' feelings of anxiety and isolation. Although the project was generally successful, the attempt to recognize the H/H faculty for its excellence failed. An effort to connect the H/H students and teachers with middle school students and teachers would benefit both segments of the county's educational system. Appendices include surveys administered and the inservice packet for middle school faculty. (16 references) (MLH/Author)

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MIDDLE SCHOOLS REACH OUT TO THE HOMEBOUND

by

Madeleine Tellekamp

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

May/1991

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Abstract

Middle Schools Reach Out To The Homebound
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The Center for the Advancement of Education.
Descriptors: Home Instruction/ Hospitalized Program/ Hospital Schools/ Hospitalized Children/ Itinerant Teachers/ Homebound Chidlren/ School Outreach Programs/ Homebound Teachers/ Elementary Education/ Intermediate Education/

The isolation experienced by Homebound/Hospitalized children during periods of treatment and recuperation, the lack of familiarity with the Homebound/Hospitalized Program by middle school faculties and students, and the lack of recognition given to Homebound/Hospitalized teachers were addressed by the implementation of this practicum. Five surveys were administered to ascertain the extent of the problems. Activities were selected and engaged in to increase middle school teacher and student awareness of the Homebound/Hospitalized Program, to increase the sensitivity of middle schoolers to the needs of the Homebound/Hospitalized students, and to reduce the feelings of anxiety and isolation prevalent with the majority of Homebound/Hospitalized students. The objectives of this study were of an academic and affective nature. It was concluded that an effort to connect the Homebound/Hospitalized students and teachers with middle school students and teachers would benefit both segments of the county's educational system. Appendices include surveys administered and the packet used to in-service the middle school faculty.

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

The practicum setting was a sixth grade center located in central Florida. The target population for this practicum was a predominately white English speaking population of students and teachers. The students receiving Homebound/Hospitalized, hereafter referred to as H/H, instruction ranged in grade level from kindergarten through grade 12. The ethnic composition of the H/H population varied from month to month and fluctuated on a daily basis with new enrollments and withdrawals. The ethnic composition of the sixth grade center was: 236 White, non-Hispanic and 120 Black, non-Hispanic. There were 46 Black kindergarten students and 21 Black Headstart students, but the writer considered them too young to be involved in the practicum. Sixty-eight students at the sixth grade center received free breakfast and lunch. Thirty-nine students received reduced breakfast and lunch. The practicum's goal was to

impact middle schoolers, middle school faculty, H/H faculty and students and the families of students receiving H/H instruction.

The writer was one of the teachers at the sixth grade center. The teaching position involved instruction of gifted/talented students in all subject areas. No students at the center were self-contained. Two teachers at the center were actively involved with the writer in this practicum. They taught Language Arts and Social Studies. The effort to unite the H/H students with the sixth graders was accomplished through Language Arts classroom and homework activities. This writer observed many misconceptions about the H/H program in addition to a total lack of awareness of the program's existence and outstanding accomplishments.

The target group of this practicum was a select group of 120 sixth graders, 18 sixth grade teachers, 15 H/H students and 20 H/H teachers. Three Language Arts sixth grade teachers worked closely with the 120 sixth grade students to assist them in their efforts to reach out to the homebound. The teachers instructed using a team approach and all 120 children received Language Arts instruction on a daily basis. The H/H teachers taught all subjects to the students

with the exception of the high school curriculum. The H/H teachers who instructed high school students were specialized in a particular area of the curriculum.

The 15 H/H students were selected from the children whose families responded favorably to the initial survey. The writer was responsible for testing and creating the method of connecting the H/H students with the sixth graders, assisting with their work both literary and artistic, instructing faculty members in ways to encourage students to participate meaningfully in this effort, initiating and planning activity days, and providing in-service training to the teachers at the sixth grade center.

The target population for this practicum was H/H students and faculty and middle school students and faculty. Children receiving instruction in the H/H program experienced feelings of isolation. Teachers and students attending regular sixth grade centers were aware of neither the needs of the H/H students nor the special talents and efforts put forth by H/H teachers everyday. A sixth grade teacher survey (Appendix A:28) and a sixth grade student survey (Appendix B:30) clearly documented the lack of

awareness of the H/H program in the regular sixth grade centers.

A survey (Appendix C:32) was completed by 20 H/H students. The results of the survey indicated that 90 percent of the students felt that they would benefit from an association with a group of students attending a sixth grade center.

A survey of parents of H/H students (Appendix D:33) verified the fact that the parents of H/H students felt it would be advantageous for their children to interact with select students at the sixth grade center. This writer anticipated that the H/H student would benefit socially and emotionally from the experience.

Ninety percent of the teachers in the H/H program responded to the survey (Appendix E:34) indicating a feeling of lack of appreciation and interest in the role they played in the county's educational system.

This writer wanted supervisors of middle schools to formalize a program for the adoption of H/H students by middle school students county-wide. This writer felt that H/H students and their families should receive the emotional support of the students and teachers of the middle schools. The middle

school faculties could alleviate the feelings of lack of awareness of the teaching efforts of the H/H faculty. To increase an awareness on the part of regular educators of the H/H program and the constraints and obstacles placed on the H/H teachers had the potential to raise the level of self-esteem of the H/H faculty in any county. Regular teachers were not aware of the difficult circumstances faced daily by the H/H teachers. If mainstream teachers were more familiar with the H/H program the transition for students from the regular classroom to the H/H program would be smoother and the effort to continue a student's learning during incapacitation facilitated.

The problem addressed in this practicum was multi-faceted: how to alleviate feelings of isolation of H/H students and their families, how to increase an understanding within the profession of the sensitive and demanding role played by H/H teachers, and how to increase the sensitivity of middle school students and faculty to the needs of those students requiring H/H instruction.

The expected outcome of this practicum was to implement a program in the county for the annual adoption of homebound students by middle school

students. Eventually this program could be reviewed for state-wide adoption. Special event days were held and projects involving both H/H students and middle schoolers were undertaken to lessen the isolation H/H students may feel during times of treatment and recovery. Faculties of middle schools grew in their appreciation of the challenges addressed by H/H teachers daily. H/H teachers gained self-respect from the increased awareness county-wide of the excellent jobs they perform.

Objective One:

After 16 weeks of implementation, 80 percent of the sixth grade students involved in the practicum will demonstrate increased sensitivity to the needs and feelings of H/H students.

Objective Two:

After 16 weeks of implementation, 80 percent of the H/H students will indicate improved feelings attributed to a sense of belonging and to the perception that they and their well being matter specifically to the middle schoolers.

Objective Three:

After 16 weeks of implementation, 75 percent of the sixth grade faculty will have an increased awareness of the arduous and sensitive tasks performed daily by H/H teachers.

Objective Four:

After 16 weeks of implementation, 75 percent of the H/H teachers will experience a sense of satisfaction from the new concern and respect given them during the completion of this practicum.

Objective Five:

After 16 weeks of implementation, 75 percent of the sixth grade students will have improved their critical thinking skills as a result of their participation in this study.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

This writer taught H/H students in 1987 for three months before entering a regular classroom in August, 1987. This writer was ignorant of the program's existence prior to that experience. Through interviews with other H/H teachers it became evident that these teachers often did not feel they received proper recognition for the demanding job they perform daily. While teaching H/H students it became obvious to this writer that the majority of students receiving H/H instruction greatly missed their regular classrooms with the exception of students experiencing school phobia. All of the students shared feelings of isolation and loneliness. From discussions with approximately 60 faculty members at three sixth grade centers, it became apparent that the majority of these teachers had little or no familiarity with the H/H program. There was no program at that time to recognize the successes of the H/H program. There was no organized

effort to link a H/H student with his/her own school or with any other school in the county. Most regular classroom teachers were unfamiliar with the H/H program and had had no contact with a H/H teacher. This writer felt that middle school students needed to be service-oriented and needed to channel their energy into projects which benefit society. There was a need to establish a program to make a caring connection between the county's middle schoolers and the homebound.

H/H teachers were under daily stress that can often be far greater than that experienced by the regular classroom teacher. In "Traveling the Side Roads of Education", Barbara Reamy referred to herself as her students' "main link to the outside world." (Reamy, 1988:161) The homebound teacher, although certified in one area, may find it necessary to teach the student all subject areas and keep the student informed about current events. That was far more demanding than the teacher who specialized in one area and had only one preparation to do. In addition to the academic demands made on the H/H teachers according to Nancy Cairns, they "also need emotional support handling their own fears and depression regarding the patient..." (Cairns, 1979:6) The need to reduce "the high turnover rate

of itinerant staff and the need of more staff to provide increased student contact" was addressed in "The Primary Itinerant Teacher." (1979:11) H/H teachers endure long working hours and the nature of their duties is exhausting. ("The Primary Itinerant Teacher," 1979:22) The H/H teachers need to "be skilled at assessing emotional, developmental and academic needs, communicating with and fostering the involvement of patients and their families in activities appropriate to their needs." ("Hospital School Programs, 1981:5) A H/H teacher must hold the same academic degree a regular teacher possesses, a Bachelor's or Master's Degree in early childhood, elementary, secondary, or special education. H/H teachers are exceptional teachers. They should not be assumed to be teachers who are unable to cope with the numbers associated with the regular classroom. As a H/H teacher, Reamy feared for her personal safety. She experienced the constant frustration familiar to all H/H teachers when a student is unable or refuses to receive instruction.

This writer was provided a whistle to use during home visits in areas where drug deals were likely to be transacted and was encouraged to blow the horn before exiting the vehicle to begin instruction in

areas of questionable safety. Such measures were to protect both the H/H student and the H/H teacher. The H/H teacher must address the emotional, intellectual, and developmental needs of each student, while coping with the challenges of locating the student and arranging to spend a time with the student which will maximize the results of the teaching encounter. The H/H teacher must be apprised of the effect hospitalization and illness have on a child's motivation, general behavior, and learning ability. The H/H teacher must possess the ability to communicate with parents and children from a myriad of socio-economic backgrounds and intellectual levels. The H/H teacher must be capable of interpreting and adapting the educational program to suit the needs of the H/H student while subordinating the goal to educate to the medical and nursing procedures the student is undergoing. Most important of all, the H/H teacher must possess "the ability to work harmoniously with others." ("Hospital School Programs," 1981:30) Many people might find it totally disconcerting to be in the company of a seriously ill child. Some accidents cause disfigurement, and some physical handicaps are repugnant to people. The H/H teacher must see beyond

the student's physical limitations, empathize with the student's pain and emotional suffering, and establish rapport with the student in order to finally educate the student.

Students receiving H/H instruction were at risk students. According to Erik Erikson, "disruptions during developmental stages can lead to feelings of inferiority and to role confusion in the school-age child." ("Hospital School Programs," 1981:2) The child's education is subordinate to the crisis physical or emotional in which he is embroiled. It is imperative that the H/H teacher provide him with systematic instruction until he is able to return to the regular classroom. "Psychologically, school connotes normalcy and familiarity, and offers a welcome and reassuring routine in the otherwise abnormal strange, and often times chaotic hospital environment." ("Hospital School Programs," 1981:2) It matters not whether the child is in a remedial, average, or accelerated tract. Each child deserves the opportunity to improve his academic skills despite incapacitation. "A major premise upon which distance teaching proceeds is that the child can, with the guidance of a home tutor and materials

prepared and dispatched by the distance teaching unit, learn to function with a degree of autonomy which is seldom demonstrated in regular classrooms." (Tomlinson, 1985:1) Sometimes, however, the H/H student needs to be encouraged to complete assigned tasks. The assistance and encouragement given by parents is essential to the success of the H/H program. "Parents are the child's first and most influential teachers." (Rich, 1986:5) The teacher and the parent work hand in hand to assist the student in his academic pursuits. "School has the second most important socializing effect on children; second to home." (Detroit Public Schools, 1980:20) Children need social interaction with other children and the competition associated with such interaction. The children receiving H/H instruction usually are denied such interaction and competition. They are receiving H/H instruction due to four major causes:

1. A non-handicapped student needs the service due to an injury or traumatic illness.

2. A special education student who becomes ill or injured requires the service.

> 3. A regular education student who becomes sick or injured and in time will return to his normal classroom needs H/H instruction.
>
> 4. Young female pregnant students require H/H instruction during the final stages of pregnancy and following delivery. (Terry, 1982:2)

H/H teachers need to address the creative developmental needs of children as well as their academic needs. This was accomplished successfully and recorded by Saide in PCAP Project Report 2 of 1984. Saide describes the creation of a teacher center designed to meet the social and creative needs of H/H students. Activity days, sports and swimming days, and mini-schools were conducted at the teacher center. Middle schoolers in regular classroom settings were not aware of the H/H program. It was through the creation of an activity day or mini-school that regular students could participate in exchanges and activities with H/H students. Saide purported that the majority of homebound students "rarely have the opportunity to work and play with their peers, and the school visit provides this opportunity and enhances the social and emotional development of isolated children." (Saide, 1984:14) Both groups of students, regular classroom students

and H/H students, grew from this type of encounter. The regular students became more sensitive to the needs of the H/H children and appreciated their own ability to attend school in a regular classroom setting. The H/H students felt connected to the middle schoolers hosting the activity day. Cultural pursuits in the areas of music, drama, and art were engaged in on activity days. These pursuits required access to resources readily available in the school setting and by their very nature requiring a degree of face to face contact. (Saide, 1984:20) The H/H teacher found it most difficult and perhaps impossible to offer this kind of enrichment in the H/H setting. Regular classroom teachers increased their knowledge of the H/H program from activity days, because the entire student body and faculty of the host middle school were involved in the events of the day. This brought regular teachers into close proximity with the H/H students and teachers. This exposure to the unfamiliar was conducive to understanding. According to Saide, the activity days, mini-schools, and home visits were not to be viewed "as alternatives but rather as complementary components of the itinerant service as a whole."

(Saide, 1984:20) The activity days suggested by Saide were difficult to accomplish without weeks of preparation. Unfortunately, many of the children anticipating surgery or recovering from it were physically unable to attend the activity days and field trips planned by the host middle school. Childen recovering from surgery need to avoid contact with the spectrum of germs prevalent in the average school's population. The field trips did prove productive for students with school phobia and other limitations not threatened by exposure to contact with the general public. A meeting of students experiencing school phobia with regular middle school students hosting the day at a location totally unrelated to the classroom was therapeutic for the H/H students and beneficial for the sixth graders as well. Due to time constraints the sponsoring middle school was only able to extend an invitation to the H/H students to one festival day on the school campus, the Black History Celebration. It was not possible to ascertain the effect attending this function would have had on the H/H students as not a single child was able to attend the function. This writer was not able to provide transportation for the students, and the majority of the students had

impending surgeries. A video of the celebration was made with the goal of sharing the experience with the H/H students.

It is vital that H/H students continue academic pursuits until capable of returning to the regular classroom. "For children, school is analagous to vocational pursuits in adults. Therefore, the child's academic progress is one of the most important and easily measurable indications of the success of rehabilitation." (Cairns, 1979:17) H/H teachers and the students they serve deserve the best resources available in the county and recognition of the successes they achieve. "All students whether regular or H/H "should be recognized for what they can do, rather than by their limitations." (Detroit Public Schools, 1980:4) If a program designed to encourage middle schoolers to reach out to the homebound were adopted in this county, the benefits to both regular students and teachers and H/H students and teachers would be immeasurable.

There is a need in both children and adults to use critical thinking skills to stay abreast of the new developments of modern society. Critical thinking skills can be taught according to Barnes. Students need to learn to make decisions and identify

values. A correspondence with H/H students required the middle school students to identify their values and make decisions in accordance with those values. They were further required to decide what ideas they wanted to communicate, the proper method to convey their ideas, and the proper vehicle to be employed to accomplish this goal. This required synthesizing skills. Not every student conveyed the message through writing. Some students created pictures, puzzles and self-portraits. The middle school students were challenged to think about the consequences of their words and the possible interpretations which could be made by the H/H students to whom their writings were addressed.

CHAPTER III

Method

This writer created an 11 step plan to be implemented during this practicum.

Step One: This writer met with the supervisor of the H/H program in the county and H/H teachers to explain the purpose of the practicum and to provide the H/H teachers with three surveys. (Appendix C:32, Appendix D:33, Appendix E:34)

Step Two: This writer administered surveys (Appendix A:28 and Appendix B:30) to the students and faculty at the sixth grade center. The results of the surveys indicated the degree of knowledge the faculty and students possessed concerning the H/H program.

Step Three: This writer met with the H/H teachers whose students responded favorably to the

survey to select 15 students and their families for the implementation. The results of Appendix C:32, Appendix D:33, and Appendix E:34 indicated the feelings of those involved in the H/H program.

Step Four: Four Language Arts blocks at the sixth grade center were involved in the implementation. Each block of approximately 30 students adopted three/four homebound students. The first contact between the students was the initiation of a pen-pal relationship. The initial letter was of an introductory brief autobiographical nature. Pictures were exchanged.

Step Five: The H/H teachers encouraged these 15 students to correspond with the sixth graders on a weekly basis for 12 weeks. The H/H students were encouraged to write poetry, short stories, cartoons and to contribute original artwork during the 12 weeks of correspondence.

Step Six: The H/H students were invited by the sixth graders who adopted them to attend (when and if physically and emotionally able) a fun day at the

sixth grade center, a celebration of Black History Month, and an annual Bowling Extravaganza.

Step Seven: The three sixth grade teachers and the H/H teachers involved with the practicum wrote anecdotal observations on the students' writings, artwork, and verbal comments concerning the pen-pal relationships.

Step Eight: This writer met with the H/H teachers to access their findings concerning changes in attitudes of the students and changes in their own attitudes.

Step Nine: This writer met with the two sixth grade Language Arts teachers to determine if attitudes and perceptions had been altered.

Step Ten: This writer intended to publish a book of the shared writings between the H/H students and the sixth graders. The parents of the H/H students did not wish to have their children's work published. Therefore, the goal to create the book was not accomplished.

Step Eleven: This writer administered follow on surveys to determine the effectiveness of the implementation and established a writing award to be presented at the sixth grade center at graduation. The award was named after two H/H teachers who exhibited exceptional concern for all involved in education, students and teachers as well.

The first requirement to implement the practicum was to obtain the names of the H/H students whose parents responded favorably to the parent questionnaire. This writer first contacted the H/H head teacher in December, 1990, and was instructed to contact her again in January, 1991, to pursue implementation at that time. In January this writer met with the H/H head teacher and provided her with the following questionnaires: H/H faculty, H/H student, and H/H parent questionnaires. Obtaining the names of the H/H students to be a part of the practicum experiment was the most difficult obstacle to surmount. It required eight separate attempts to obtain the names and the retrieve the questionnaires. This writer contacted H/H teachers individually to ask for their assistance. The four teachers contacted provided the names of students

whose parents granted permission for their children to participate in this study. The H/H teachers also selected students they felt would benefit from this effort to connect them to middle school students.

Each of the three Language Arts teachers at the middle school received the names of the H/H students. Each middle school student wrote a brief autobiographical sketch of himself in the form of a friendly letter to introduce himself to the H/H students. The H/H students also wrote introductory letters to the sixth graders. The first letters received by the sixth graders were letters written by students in a local hospital who were anticipating surgery or just recovering from it. Valentine limericks, sea fantasy stories, original art, and self-portraits were exchanged between the H/H students and the sixth graders at the sixth grade center. All of the H/H students who were physically able were invited to attend the Annual Bowling Extravaganza. The outing was beneficial to the H/H students and to the sixth graders. The H/H students were made to feel welcome immediately. The initial pen pal relationship had enabled the children to get to know one another prior to the meeting. An added bonus which was not anticipated by this writer was

the friendly verbal exchange between the H/H parents. It was an excellent opportunity for them to share their own feelings about their child's inability to attend regular school. It appeared to be a time of catharsis for the parents attending.

The greatest resource for this writer was the H/H teachers willing to participate in the experiment. The two Language Arts teachers at the sixth grade center were also a great support and resource. The principal at the middle school provided the writer with a packet created by the central county office. This packet explained in depth the H/H program and the correct procedure to follow when enrolling a student in the program. It was the combination of this packet, the information prepared by this writer, and artwork prepared by both a H/H student and a sixth grade student that was used to in-service the sixth grade faculty. Teachers and nurses at the local hospitals who had direct contact with H/H students also provided this writer with information about the success of this endeavor.

The only equipment used during the implementation was a 35mm camera, a video camera, a television, and a video cassette recorder.

It was easy to determine that both the H/H students and the sixth graders liked to receive the letters. This writer contacted the H/H teachers every two weeks to check on the children's progress and to ask if additional names were available. The two Language Arts teachers at the sixth grade center kept in close touch with this writer concerning the benefits gained by the sixth graders from their connection with the H/H students. An assessment of the knowledge gained by the sixth grade faculty was postponed until the time of in-service and the administration of the posttest.

The program was more successful with the older H/H students than with the elementary age H/H students. This phenomenon could be due in part to the greater ease an older child might have had with the actual task of corresponding. This writer feels that any time one person reaches out to another, there will be emotional growth for at least one of the parties involved. The majority of the younger H/H students were also hospitalized as opposed to being homebound. The reality of waiting for or recovering from surgery may have had a pronounced effect on the students' abilities to correspond, and age was not a factor at all. The middle school

students were instructed not to inquire of their pen pals the nature of the children's problems. Discussions were held and the middle school students were encouraged to decide for themselves using critical thinking skills why they should not inquire about the cause of the students' need to receive H/H instruction. Self-portraits and pictures were exchanged between both groups of students, some of which were very revealing as to the problems unique to certain of the H/H students. No mention was ever made of the child's condition, however, in the correspondence.

At the Bowling Extravaganza the middle school students became very protective of their H/H pen pals. To this writer that behavior was indicative of the success of this program with middle school students.

Timeline

Week One	Step One	Meet with H/H Supervisor H/H Student Survey H/H Parent Survey
Week Two	Step Two	Sixth Grade Student Survey Sixth Grade Teacher Survey
Week Three	Step Three	Meet With H/H Teachers to Select 15 Students
Week Four	Step Four	Adopt Three/Four H/H Students Per Language Arts Block Initiate Pen-Pal Relationships
Week Five-Eight	Step Five	Sixth Grade Teachers And H/H Teachers Encourage Pen-Pal Relationships
Week Nine	Step Six	H/H Students Invited To Sixth Grade Center Activities
Week Ten	Step Seven	H/H and Sixth Grade Teachers Write Anecdotal Observations

Week Eleven	Step Eight	Meet With H/H Teachers To Access Their Findings
Week Twelve	Step Nine	Meet With Sixth Grade Teachers To Determine Results
Week Thirteen-Fourteen	Step Ten	Continue Pen Pal Relationships Adding New Names To Replace Those Released From The H/H Program In-service Sixth Grade Faculty
Week Fifteen-Sixteen	Step Eleven	Follow On Week Surveys Of H/H Faculty H/H Students H/H Parents Sixth Grade Center Faculty Regular Sixth Grade Students

CHAPTER IV

Results

The anticipated outcome of this practicum was to successfully implement a plan to enable middle schoolers to reach out to the homebound. The objective of this program was to serve as a model for the state. It was this writer's opinion that all students, especially middle schoolers, need to be service-oriented. If this program were adopted by other school districts, the benefits to H/H children would be outstanding and middle schoolers would have a positive social and behavioral objective to strive for to compliment the academic objectives desired for their age level.

Objective One: After 16 weeks of implementation, the middle school participants in the program will experience increased sensitivity to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. The middle schoolers will become aware of the positive changes in the attitudes of the H/H students and the impact they had in producing this change.

Objective Two: After 16 weeks of implementation, the H/H students will have an increased enthusiasm for life. Their emotional and psychological levels will be improved. Feelings of isolation will lessen.

Objective Three: After 16 weeks of implementation, 75 percent of the sixth grade center faculty will demonstrate an increased awareness of the H/H program and the sensitive demands faced by H/H teachers daily.

Objective Four: After 16 weeks of implementation of the program, Middle School Reach Out To The Homebound, 80 percent of the Homebound teachers will experience increased levels of self-esteem attributed to the education of regular teachers concerning the H/H program.

Objective Five: After 16 weeks of implementation of the program, 75 percent of the sixth grade students will have improved critical thinking skills as a result of their participation in this study.

After 16 weeks of implementation the sixth grade students involved in the practicum experienced increased sensitivity to the needs and feelings of

H/H students. These sixth graders used critical thinking skills in order to communicate effectively with the H/H students. The sixth graders ascertained which topics would be appropriate in correspondence with the H/H students and which would be of a damaging or sensitive nature. After 16 weeks of implementation 90 percent of the H/H students indicated improved feelings attributed to a sense of belonging and to the perception that they and their well being mattered specifically to the middle schoolers. Ninety-eight percent of the sixth grade faculty had increased awareness of the arduous and sensitive tasks performed by the H/H teachers. The sixth grade teachers through in-service were made aware of the emotional as well as physical needs and imperfections in their students. Through education about the H/H program they were enabled to assess critically the needs of those students attending regular classes exhibiting school phobia tendencies. Fifty percent of the H/H teachers involved in this experience acknowledged a sense of satisfaction from the new concern and respect given them during the completion of this practicum. The students at the sixth grade center scored 41 percent correctly on the pretest and 84 percent correct on the posttest. On

the pretest the sixth grade faculty obtained a correct score of 50 percent. However, on the posttest (which was the same as the pretest), the sixth grade faculty obtained a score of 98 percent correct.

This writer was not able to administer a posttest to the H/H students due to the fact that many of them had returned to their homes at the conclusion of this study. The success of the program for that group of participants was determined by information provided by the H/H teachers. This information was positive as to the impact of the program on the H/H student population.

Four of the five outcome objectives were successfully accomplished during the implementation of the practicum. At the center of any educational program is the student. The focal point of this practicum consisted of two groups of students, the H/H students and the middle school students. During the implementation period the H/H students felt connected to the middle school students through regular correspondence. Some students wrote directly to their pen pals' homes and others availed themselves of the school mail system accessible to their teachers. The school mail required more time

for connection, but worked effectively and saved the students postage. Students in the sixth grade center were also able to write to the students who were receiving H/H instruction at local hospitals and used the school mail system to accomplish this.

It is the opinion of this writer that the pen pal relationship was of more benefit to the H/H students than to the sixth graders. The H/H teachers related on numerous occasions how appreciative the H/H students were to receive letters, drawings, stories, and poems from the sixth graders. The program was successful in alleviating feelings of isolation on the part of the H/H students. The students in the hospital setting did not respond to the letters of the sixth graders. This could in part be attributed to the fact that they were anticipating a surgery or numerous surgeries, or were recovering from surgery and did not feel well enough to correspond. The older H/H students, grade six through twelve, responded more frequently and seemed more able to relate to middle school students. The sixth grade students enjoyed the correspondence and efforts to share the end products of their creative writing assignments. They had hoped to hear more frequently from their pen pals. Real sharing and

caring were observed in the sixth graders by their Language Arts teachers. Some H/H students corresponded with specific sixth graders of their own choosing and other wrote to an entire class of students. In a few cases the H/H students who were unable to hold a writing implement dictated their letters to their H/H teachers, who subsequently forwarded the letters to the desired recipients. Both groups of children benefited from the correspondence. No H/H students were able to attend the Black History Celebration, but a video was produced to enable the sixth graders to share this occasion with them. Several H/H students attended the school's Annual Bowling Extravaganza. Prior to the event these students were assigned to teams of sixth graders who in the opinion of their teachers exhibited sensitivity and kindness. The bowling experience was extremely successful. The sixth graders were warm, accepting, and encouraging. The H/H students not only benefited from the encounter with the sixth graders, but also from the connection with each other. This was an added bonus not anticipated by this writer. Telephone numbers were exchanged and new friendships were made.

The in-service training to familiarize the sixth grade faculty with relevant aspects of the H/H program proved successful. A posttest administered to the faculty indicated a 98 percent mastery of the material covered. The in-service not only benefited the faculty through increased awareness and knowledge, but hopefully will benefit future students who might need to be enrolled in the H/H program. An awareness of the program's purpose, goals, and the correct procedures for enrollment would unquestionably facilitate any contact between the regular school and the H/H program, thus benefiting the students and teachers.

The fourth goal, to recognize the H/H faculty for its excellence was not successful. This writer encountered obstacles preventing the total attainment of this goal. This writer feels that it is difficult to make one group of teachers appreciate the accomplishments of another group of teachers. Often teachers tend to be so engrossed in their own endeavors that they have little time to examine and appreciate the work of others. This writer contacted a local newspaper in an effort to have an article printed to recognize the work performed by the H/H faculty. This effort was fruitless. At the sixth

grade site in June at the graduation exercises, two of the H/H teachers, a H/H student, and a sixth grade student will be honored. This writer intends to create a writing award to be named after the two H/H teachers. The award will be given to the H/H student and to the sixth grade student who exhibited excellence in writing the past academic year. The award will be presented annually at the middle school in recognition of the outstanding achievements of both the students and the teachers after whom the award was named.

The objectives of the practicum were based on assessed needs. To achieve success in all areas would necessitate the backing of concerned persons in the central office of a county school system and the cooperative efforts of the H/H staff and faculty and the middle school staff and faculty. This writer feels that the practicum was successful and intends to repeat it with a few minor changes during the next school year.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

The results of this practicum may find potential for state-wide district adoption. This program could be shared with all supervisors of middle schools and middle school teachers.

A program to encourage middle school students to reach out to the homebound has merit for both groups of students involved. To ensure maximum success this program should receive financial consideration and assistance from the central county office. There would need to be a middle school contact person responsible for heading a committee within the school to educate, lead, and supervise the activities at the school site. Similarly, at the H/H site a contact person would need to be designated to fulfill the same role with his faculty. These people should be monetarily compensated for their extra time and effort, as are team leaders in sixth grade centers and department heads in high schools. It is the

opinion of this writer that the benefits of the program merit the expenditure. A program of this nature, by necessity, needs to be part of the principal's vision for the school. The program should be explained to the faculty, staff, and students at the beginning of the school year and implemented the entire year. Involvement in the program should be accomplished through Language Arts activities initially. There is no reason why this could not be extended, if successful, to science activities such as Odyssey of the Mind. The only obstacles to the success of a program of this nature are apathy on the part of the participants and the seriousness of the illness or treatment to the student and the incapacitation resulting from that illness. This writer recommends that this program be implemented at the beginning of the school year and continued until the close of the school year. This writer feels that this county and all counties could improve their school systems by the addition of a program to reach out to the homebound.

One half of the target group, the H/H teachers in this county and the sixth grade Language Arts teachers in this program could become instructors for middle school workshops and inservices. Time would

need to be allotted for inservices and points determined for recertification purposes. A guidebook could be created to assist middle school principals and regular and H/H teachers in the adoption and implementation of this program. The results of the adoption of this program would bring tremendous encouragement to H/H students and their families and create in middle schoolers an awareness of man's concern for his fellow man.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Sixth Grade Teacher Survey

Directions: Circle the correct answer.

1. Do you know what Homebound is?

   a. yes b. no

2. How long must a child be unable to attend school prior to receiving instruction from a homebound teacher?

   a. not even one day
   b. a week
   c. two weeks
   d. a month

3. Is Homebound instruction just for public school children?

   a. yes b. no

4. Do you think that your classroom students would benefit from an awareness of and/or a relationship with children who are homebound?

   a. yes b. no

5. How many teachers are there in the county's homebound instruction program?

   a. 10 b. 20 c. 30

6. How many children were served by Homebound instruction in 1989-1990?

   a. 20 b. 30 c. 40 d. more than 40

7. During 1989-1990 what was the average period of instruction for a homebound student?

   a. 2 weeks
   b. 4-9 weeks
   c. 18 weeks
   d. 36 weeks

8. Do most students receiving homebound instruction wish they could be back in their regular schools?

   a. yes b. no

9. Is homebound instruction for:
   a. preschool students
   b. high school students
   c. elementary students
   d. all K through Grade 12 students who require this service

10. Would you like to know more about homebound instruction?

    a. yes b. no

Appendix B:

Sixth Grade Student Survey

Directions: Circle the correct answer.

1. Do you know what Homebound education is?

   a. yes b. no

2. Is Homebound instruction for:

   a. Children who do not want to go to a public school.
   b. Children who have been sick or injured and cannot get to their regular public school.
   c. Children whose parents teach them at home.
   d. Really rich children who think they are too special to attend public or private school.

3. Is Homebound instruction just for public school students?

   a. yes b. no

4. How long must a child miss school before a homebound teacher will begin instruction in the home or hospital?

   a. not even one day
   b. a week
   c. two weeks
   d. a month

5. How many children are served by Homebound instruction annually?

   a. 20 b. 30 c. 40 d. more than 40

6. What was the average length of instruction time with a homebound teacher in 1989-1990?

   a. two weeks
   b. 4-9 weeks
   c. 18 weeks
   d. 36 weeks

7. How many Homebound teachers are there in the county?

   a. 10 b. 20 c. 30

8. Do most of the students receiving Homebound instruction wish they could be back in regular schools?

   a. yes b. no

9. Is Homebound instruction for:

   a. preschool students
   b. high school students
   c. elementary students
   d. all students in K through Grade 12 who require this service.

10. Would you like to know more about Homebound students?

    a. yes b. no

Appendix C:

Homebound/Hospitalized Student Survey

Circle your choice.

1. Do you miss your regular school?

   a. yes b. no

2. Would you like to become a part of our school via pen-pal and picture relationships?

   a. yes b. no

3. Would you like to contribute art work, poems, short stories, or any original writing you have done or will do to a book created by the children at our school who are interested in you?

   a. yes b. no

4. Would you like for this book to be placed in your school's library so that all of your friends could see the neat things you have done while recuperating?

   a. yes b. no

5. Would you ever want to visit our school on special occasions and meet the students who wrote to you and share in the book's publication?

   a. yes b. no

P.S. We hope you say yes.

The Elementary School Students

Appendix D:

Homebound/Hospitalized Parent Survey

1. Will you allow the students at the elementary school to share in your child's world as pen-pals and through the sharing of original art, writing, and pictures?

   a. yes b. no

2. Do you think your child would benefit from this special attention and concern?

   a. yes b. no

3. Would you allow your child to share his/her art, poems, short stories with the students in our school to be published in our county and placed in the library of his/her regular school?

   a. yes b. no

4. Would you ever permit your child to be our guest at the school for special plays, concerts, speakers, etc.?

   a. yes b. no

5. Is there anything special that you would like us to know about your special child?

   _____

   _____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

Appendix E:

Homebound/Hospitalized Teacher Survey

Directions: Circle your choice.

1. Do you think that the students you teach would benefit from a pen-pal and picture exchange relationship with selected students from an elementary school?

   a. yes b. no

2. In your opinion do the majority of students in the county public school system have an awareness of the Homebound/Hospitalized Program?

   a. yes b. no

3. Would you be willing to send me original artwork, poems, short stories, etc. on any topic created by your homebound students? This would be done with the parents' consent and with the understanding that some of the children's contributions would be incorporated into a book to be published by the elementary students. The contributing homebound students would, of course, be recognized for their contributions. A copy of the book would be placed in the libraries of all schools where the homebound students would attend if the circumstances were different.

   a. yes b. no

4. Do you think that a project to connect H/H students with a specific school would benefit the students attending that school with increased sensitivity to the needs of the special children you teach?

   a. yes b. no

5. In your opinion are the majority of the county's teachers aware of the outstanding and unique service you render to the youngsters in our county who are unable to attend regular schools?

   a. yes b. no